

PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release

Re: Holiday Recycling Guidelines

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Holiday Recycling Guidelines

During the holiday season, the average American family disposes of 25% more trash than they usually do (Source: US EPA). Think about your household: could some of this trash be reduced, reused, recycled or composted? Reducing holiday trash can help households save money on “Pay As You Throw” town trash stickers or bags, reduce carbon and methane emissions, and protect our environment.

Recycling Yes/No

Wrapping paper, gift bags, tissue paper, and paper greeting cards/envelopes are all recyclable. However, paper items that contain metallic inks, glitter, wire, or foil (such as foil-lined envelopes) are not acceptable in recycling. Tape and labels are OK. Remove batteries from singing greeting cards before recycling the card. Button batteries are accepted for special recycling at District transfer stations; place in a bag or container and hand to attendant.

Please DO NOT put the following items in household recycling: ribbons, bows, tinsel, glossy photo cards, holiday light strings, Christmas tree netting, bubble wrap, paper envelopes lined with bubble wrap, packing peanuts, Styrofoam, plastic shipping envelopes, plastic bags, and formed plastic used to package toys, electronics, etc.

Here’s a holiday tip: when opening or wrapping presents, use a paper bag to collect paper recyclables. Other recyclable paper items include catalogs, calendars, paper shopping bags, and cardboard (corrugated and paperboard).

Recyclables from Franklin County towns are processed at the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). For recycling guides, including a colorful yes/no holiday recycling guide from the Springfield MRF, visit springfieldmrf.org and click on “What’s Recyclable.”

Recycling Options for Other Materials

Holiday light strings, power cords, and Christmas tree netting are not acceptable in municipal recycling programs because these “tanglers” get wrapped around and jammed in the sorting equipment at recycling facilities. Holiday light strings and power cords are accepted for recycling at scrap metal dealers and in the scrap metal dumpsters at town transfer stations.

Clean, dry packing materials such as bubble wrap, packing peanuts, Styrofoam sheets, and inflatable “air pillow” packaging are accepted free for reuse at “pack and ship” stores, such as The UPS Store in Greenfield.

In addition, bubble wrap, plastic shipping envelopes (no paper), and inflatable “air pillow” packaging are accepted in plastic bag recycling programs at retail stores. A list of acceptable items is at www.plasticfilmrecycling.org.

When the holidays are over, check with your town about Christmas tree recycling. Your tree may be recycled as mulch this spring.

Reduce and Reuse

In addition to recycling, consider wrapping gifts in reused materials that you might already have at home. Gifts can be creatively wrapped in leftover wrapping paper, old calendar pages, sheet music, maps or map book pages, newspaper, paper bags, old posters, wallpaper scraps, fabric, scarves, comics, or kids' artwork.

Consider wrapping gifts in reusable decorative tins, cloth bags, Christmas stockings, reusable shopping bags, or baskets. Or make the wrapping part of the gift; use a kitchen towel or oven mitt to hold kitchen utensils or gadgets, or a new bath towel and reusable cloth ribbon to wrap up gifts of bath accessories.

Wrapped gifts can be tied up with twine and adorned with pine or holly branches, pinecones, shells or buttons. Last year's holiday cards can be cut up to reuse as beautiful gift cards.

One of the most important steps for reusing materials is unwrapping gifts carefully and saving gift-wrap, gift boxes, ribbons, bows and gift bags for reuse next year.

Compost

Another way to reduce holiday trash is by composting food and paper waste generated from holiday meals. Food scraps add up: 28% of the residential trash in Massachusetts is compostable material such as food and paper waste. (Data from MassDEP's 2019 Waste Characterization Study: <https://tinyurl.com/2019WasteStudy>)

Municipal compost programs accept all types of food waste, including meat, bones, cheese, plus paper waste such as paper napkins, paper towels, and more. Unacceptable items include liquids, foil, metal, glass, plastic and plastic bags. These programs are free of charge; access permits may be required. Compost programs are currently operating at the transfer stations in Bernardston, Deerfield, Greenfield (open to non-residents), Leverett, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Wendell, and Whately.

The Solid Waste District sells discounted "Earth Machine" home compost bins and compost pails to District residents. Pricing is \$25 or \$55 depending on the resident's town. It is not recommended to put meat, bones, dairy in home compost bins. For more details and pricing (varies by town), contact the waste district or see: www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/compostbinsales.html

For more information, contact Franklin County Solid Waste Management District: (413) 772-2438, info@franklincountywastedistrict.org; or visit www.franklincountywastedistrict.org. *MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1-800-439-2370 (TTY/TDD).*